

24 DAYS **DESERT TO THE SEA**

CENTRAL AUSTRALIA TO THE WHITSUNDAYS, MAGICAL FRASER ISLAND & SYDNEY

DEPARTING WEDNESDAY 23RD MAY TO FRIDAY 15TH JUNE 2012

MOTEL ACCOMMODATION – RESTAURANT & SAFARI STYLE MEALS



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HIGHLIGHTS

WOOMERA # ROXBY DOWNS # COOBER PEDY
ULURU # KATA TJUTA # ALICE SPRINGS
DEVILS MARBLES # EAST MACDONNELL RANGES
NATIONAL TRANSPORT MUSEUM
CROCODILE DUNDEE HOTEL
AIRLIE BEACH # HAMILTON ISLAND
WORLD HERITAGE FRASER ISLAND TOUR
AUSTRALIA ZOO # SUNSHINE COAST
BIG PINEAPPLE # NOOSA
GOLD COAST # SURFERS PARADISE
AUSTRALIA OUTBACK SPECTACULAR DINNER
BYRON BAY # COFFS HARBOUR
BIG BANANA # SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE # STAR CITY CASINO
SYDNEY HARBOUR DINNER CRUISE
SYDNEY TOWER # PADDYS MARKET

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 23RD MAY **D.**
HOME TO ADELAIDE

The first day of our trip is spent travelling via the Western Highway through Bordertown and Murray Bridge to Adelaide for our first overnight stop. Dinner tonight will be in the motel restaurant.

Accom: Manhattan Motor Inn Ph: 08 8262 2748

DAY 2: THURSDAY 24TH MAY **B.L.D.**
ADELAIDE TO ROXBY DOWNS

Early start this morning as we head north through Port Augusta the seaport located on the east coast of the Eyre Peninsula and at the head of the Spencer Gulf. Continue on to Woomera which once was a secret town closed to the outside world, but the village now welcomes visitors wishing to experience the extraordinary history of Woomera. We head further north to Roxby Downs. Roxby Downs the mining town was purpose built to service the

Olympic Dam mine which is Australia's largest underground mine and contains one of the largest known ore bodies in the world today. The multi mineral Olympic Dam Mine is owned by BHP Billiton and produces copper, uranium, silver and gold.

Accom: Roxby Downs Motor Inn Ph: 08 8671 0311

DAY 3: FRIDAY 25TH MAY **B.L.D.**
OLYMPIC DAM MINE TOUR/ANDAMOOKA

This will be a full day touring the Roxby Downs area. Roxby Downs is a unique town with a residential population of around 4,500 with an average age of 29. Around 38% of the population is less than 15 years of age, with the town having one of the highest birth rates in Australia. With a lifestyle that is the envy of many, Roxby Downs is truly a unique destination and a place full of opportunity. This morning we visit the Roxby Downs Olympic Dam Mine for a guided tour. After lunch, we travel the short distance to Andamooka, and enjoy a town tour, visit an opal showroom and the Dukes Bottle House.

DAY 4: SATURDAY 26TH MAY **B.L.D.**
ROXBY DOWNS TO COOBER PEDY

Departing Roxby Downs, we make our way back to the Stuart Highway and head north to Lake Hart one of the glistening salt lakes South Australia is famous for. Further onto Glendambo for our lunch stop. The final leg of today's journey takes us to Coober Pedy, South Australia's biggest opal mining town. Coober Pedy has evolved in to one of the most unique places in Australia and perhaps the world. It is a town with a population of 3,500 and over 45 different nationalities.

Accom: Mud Hut Motel Ph: 08 8672 3003

DAY 5: SUNDAY 27TH MAY **B.L.D.**
COOBER PEDY SIGHTSEEING

Something different today, we spend the whole day exploring the unique outback town of Coober Pedy. Our visits include travelling along the road to Oodnadatta until we come to the dog fence where we enter the Breakaways, a 40sq.km. reserve containing unique landscape, flora and fauna. The Breakaways has been the location for several films and advertisements. Stop at a working mine out in the Opal Fields. We make our way back to town and stop at the Coober Pedy Golf Course. After lunch, we have a guided town tour and visit the remarkable Umoona Opal Mine and Museum, which is completely underground and contains a museum including all aspects of opal mining and aboriginal culture. Enjoy a guided tour through an underground home and an opal mine before we return to the motel for dinner after a memorable day sightseeing in Coober Pedy.

DAY 6: MONDAY 28TH MAY B.L.D.
COOBER PEDY TO AYERS ROCK

This morning we travel further north as we cross the dog fence and continue through the township of Cadney Park and onto Marla. From here, we make our way to the Northern Territory/South Australian border. On through Kulgera we arrive in Erldunda, which is at the junction of the Stuart and Lasseter Highways. Continuing across the vast cattle stations of Mt. Ebenezer and Curtain Springs where we have a stop at Lake Amadeus before continuing on to Ayers Rock

Accom: Desert Gardens Hotel Ph: 08 8957 7888

DAY 7: TUESDAY 29TH MAY B.L.D.
AYERS ROCK

Ayers Rock (Uluru) standing 348 metres high and with a circumference of 8.8km is an awesome spectacle rising from seemingly nowhere in the deep centre of Australia. It is one of the world's great natural wonders dominating this otherwise flat, dry terrain. Nothing prepares you for the impact of Uluru, as its sheer immensity dwarfs everything around it. Uluru has acquired its reputation not just because it is such a unique landform, but also because of the effect the sun has on its colours and appearance. Sunrises and Sunsets cause changes to its colour from browns through oranges, reds to finally grey. Our first stop is the visitors centre before we begin our drive around the base of the rock. After lunch, we travel west to visit Kata Tjuta which is a highlight of any visit to the Red Centre. Kata Tjuta is a cluster of rounded massive rocks which are dramatic and vividly coloured. We can walk through the fascinating domes, gorges and valleys. There will be time for optional flights (passengers own expense) over Uluru and Kata Tjuta should you wish. Tonight we make our way to Sunset Strip to take the important photographs of the sunset at Uluru.

DAY 8: WEDNESDAY 30TH MAY B.L.D.
AYERS ROCK TO ALICE SPRINGS

Today we travel back to the Stuart Highway making our way to Stuarts Well stopping at Camels Australia where there is an opportunity to have a short ride on a camel. Early this afternoon we arrive at Alice Springs and our home for the next two nights. Framed by the magnificent MacDonnell Ranges and an intense desert landscape, the township of Alice Springs is Australia's most famous outback town. "The Alice" lies almost geographically as the centre of the Australian continent. This afternoon we enjoy a visit to "Rex the Snake Man", and learn about many of the reptiles found in Central Australia.

Accom: Heavitree Gap Outback Lodge Ph: 08 8950 4444

DAY 9: THURSDAY 31ST MAY B.L.D.
EAST MACDONNELL RANGES

A visit today to the East MacDonnell Ranges. The first of the nature parks we visit are the Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Parks, which are both important in the Arrente Aboriginal peoples Caterpillar Dreaming Trails. Emily Gap is probably the most important as it is where the caterpillar beings originated. Further on is the Trepkina Gorge Nature Park. There are some fabulous walks around the gorge, amongst the beautiful rocky landscape. We return to Alice Springs and visit the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the National Transport Museum. The museum is a history lesson on how Australia's tough terrain broke the best vehicles the world could throw at it. Afterwards there is time to stroll the Todd Mall and relax before dinner at the Heavitree Gap Tavern.

DAY 10: FRIDAY 1ST JUNE B.D.
ALICE SPRINGS TO TENNANT CREEK

An early start today as we continue north along the Stuart Highway crossing the Tropic of Capricorn and a quick stop at the small Central Mount Stuart Historical Reserve. The cairn commemorates the discovery in 1860 of the centre of Australia by explorer John McDouall Stuart. We visit the Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve which is located on the Stuart Highway between Alice Springs and Darwin, and set against a striking background of the Australian desert. The Devils Marbles are a group of large rounded rocks, some of which are performing a very impressive balancing act. We continue on to Tennant Creek, which is an outback town shaped by pastoralism, aboriginal culture, copper, gold and tin mining. The surrounding area is called the Barkly Tablelands, a region characterised by wide grassy plains, endless blue sky and massive cattle stations.

Accom: Bluestone Motor Inn Ph: 08 8962 2617

DAY 11: SATURDAY 2ND JUNE B.D.
TENNANT CREEK TO MOUNT ISA

After breakfast, we continue further north along the Stuart Highway to the highway junction at Three Ways. Travelling east we cross the Barkly Tablelands stopping briefly at the Barkly Homestead. We cross the Queensland-Northern Territory border at Camooweal, 330 kilometres south of Burketown and 188 kilometres from Mount Isa. Camooweal proudly declares itself 'Gateway to the Northern Territory/Queensland'. We travel further on to Mt Isa, which is our overnight stop.

Accom: Inland Oasis Motel Ph: 07 4743 3433

DAY 12: SUNDAY 3RD JUNE B.D.
MOUNT ISA TO CHARTERS TOWERS

Travel via McKinlay to visit the Walkabout Creek Hotel. Originally known as the Federal Hotel it was built in 1900 and was licensed in 1901. The Walkabout Creek Hotel is now famous for being recognized as the pub in the Paul Hogan movie "Crocodile Dundee". Continue east through Richmond often referred to as an oasis in the outback, and on to Hughenden situated on the banks of Queensland's longest river, the Flinders. The town is located above the Great Artesian Basin which provides the only reliable source of freshwater through much of inland Australia. Leaving Hughenden the Flinders Highway takes us on to Charters Towers for our overnight stop. Charters Towers is a scenic gold mining city that is big on history and character. From a chance discovery of gold in 1871, Charters Towers was soon turned into a bustling metropolis, which in its heyday, boasted being the second largest city in Queensland. Dinner and Breakfast is in the motel restaurant.

Accom: Cattlemans Rest Motel Ph: 07 4787 3555

DAY 13: MONDAY 4TH JUNE B.D.
CHARTERS TOWERS TO AIRLIE BEACH

This morning we reach the east coast of Australia travelling via Ayr within the Burdekin Shire. The Burdekin shire produces the most sugarcane per square kilometre in Australia, and then on to Bowen which sits on a square peninsula, with ocean to the north, east, and south. Bowen is in the dry tropics, and so has all the warm sunny weather of a tropical climate, but it is much dryer than the tropical beaches overlooking the Great Barrier Reef. The town of Airlie Beach the perfect holiday destination awaits us, and being positioned on a picturesque peninsula that reaches out into the Whitsunday waters, the town is an ideal base for a huge array of holiday enjoyment on the mainland, islands and

in the surrounding Whitsunday waters. Dinner and Breakfast is in the motel restaurant.

Accom: Coral Sea Resort Ph: 07 4964 1300

DAY 14: TUESDAY 5TH JUNE B.D.
AIRLIE BEACH / HAMILTON ISLAND

This morning we board the Fantasea Cruises ferry and make our way to Hamilton Island. Here we will enjoy the morning exploring the island on our bus tour, and then with time to relax in the resort. After lunch, we board the ferry back to Airlie Beach where the rest of the afternoon is free to enjoy this magnificent holiday location. Dinner and Breakfast is in the motel restaurant.

DAY 15: WEDNESDAY 6TH JUNE B.D.
AIRLIE BEACH TO HERVEY BAY

Travelling south through the amazing range of natural features and cultural heritage at Mackay and on to Rockhampton known as the Beef Capital of Australia and the gateway between the coast and the outback. Further south 100km the Gladstone Region is a unique area and the city of Gladstone is developed on hills overlooking the focal point of its economic development the natural deepwater harbour. This is the Wide Bay Burnett region of Queensland being the coastal and hinterland areas between Gladstone and Caloundra and it has unique natural advantages, with an enviable climate and proximity to the major trading and service centres of South East Queensland. Late afternoon we pass through Childers the Qld town where the deliberately lit Childers Palace Backpackers Hostel fire on 23 June 2000 killed 15 backpackers. Hervey Bay is our destination and Hervey Bay with its wonderful sub tropical temperature has often been called the jewel in Queensland's crown. It is also referred to as the Whale Watch Capital of the World. Dinner and Breakfast is in the motel restaurant.

Accom: Mantra Hervey Bay. 07 4197 8200

DAY 16: THURSDAY 7TH JUNE B.D.
HERVEY BAY / FRASER ISLAND

A real highlight of the tour is a trip across to the World Heritage listed Fraser Island, the world's largest sand island that is a place of exceptional beauty. The sand surprisingly supports fresh water lakes bright as jewels, perched in the tops of the sand dunes and fast-flowing, crystal-clear creeks. This is the only place in the world where tall rainforests are found growing on sand dunes at elevations of over 200 metres. Famous 75-Mile Beach is flanked by strikingly coloured sand cliffs and desert-like sand blows. Fresh water creeks flow across it into the ocean. We may see some of Australia's purest bred dingoes or some of the 354 recorded bird species, which range from rainbow-coloured parrots to birds of prey. We will learn about the natural and cultural history of Fraser Island. Paddle or swim in the crystal-clear blue waters of Lake McKenzie, the island's most beautiful perched lake. We drive along spectacular 75- Mile Beach and stop to paddle or swim in the cool fresh waters of Eli Creek. This swift flowing creek, the largest on the eastern beach, spills 80 megalitres of water into the ocean every day. We visit the Maheno shipwreck and marvel at the coloured sands of the Pinnacles. Dinner and Breakfast is in the motel restaurant.

DAY 17: FRIDAY 8TH JUNE B.D.
HERVEY BAY TO CALOUNDRA

A tour highlight this morning at Beerwah where we visit the Australia Zoo which is a 31 ha zoo located on the Sunshine Coast and is owned by Terri Irwin, the widow of the late

Steve Irwin. At the zoo, a team of passionate conservationists work round-the-clock to deliver an animal experience like no other. Perhaps cuddle a koala, hand-feed the Asian elephants, walk with a Sumatran tiger and watch a crocodile launch from the waters edge. Australia Zoo is the ultimate wildlife adventure. This afternoon we arrive in Caloundra for you to spend some time exploring the pristine beach and immediate area. Dinner and Breakfast is in the motel restaurant.

DAY 18: SATURDAY 9TH JUNE B.D.
CALOUNDRA TO GOLD COAST

Our tour today is a shorter trip and takes us through the outskirts of Brisbane on our way to the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast is known as a major tourist destination with its sunny subtropical climate, surfing beaches, canal and waterway systems, its high-rise dominated skyline, nightlife and rainforest hinterland. Our accommodation is in the heart of Surfers Paradise and the afternoon is yours to stroll the beach or perhaps visit the many tourist shops in Cavill Avenue. Tonight is something special on this tour, as premium top rail seats and dinner have been booked for the Australian Outback Spectacular Dinner Show. One of Australia's most legendary stories is retold as Australian Outback Spectacular celebrates the courageous spirit of the Australian horse and commemorates the legend that is Phar Lap. Australian Outback Spectacular's 'Spirit of the Horse' features an amazing cast of larger than life characters, magnificent animals including the Australian stock horse, stunning special effects and a delicious three course dinner.. Breakfast is in the motel restaurant.

Accom: Vibe Hotel Ph: 07 5539 0444

DAY 19: SUNDAY 10TH JUNE B.D.
GOLD COAST TO COFFS HARBOUR

Leaving the Gold Coast this morning we travel via Coolangatta and Tweed Heads where we cross the border in to New South Wales, stopping at Byron Bay for lunch. Byron Bay is the eastern most point of Australia's mainland on the New South Wales north coast. It is famous for its alternative lifestyles and attracts people from all walks of life. Cape Byron is a 107 metre high rocky promontory at Australia's most eastern point. It protects Byron Bay and we visit the Cape Byron lighthouse. Its light beams more than 40 km out to sea to warn sailors to beware of the treacherous coastline. Byron Bay has a subtropical climate all year with the cooling coastal winds providing relief in summer. Further on to Ballina, Grafton and our overnight stop at Coffs Harbour. Dinner and Breakfast is in the motel restaurant.

Accom: Opal Cove Resort Ph: 1800 008 198

DAY 20: MONDAY 11TH JUNE B.D.
COFFS HARBOUR TO PORT MACQUARIE

This morning is spent in Coffs Harbour where our first visit is the Big Banana where we see the Bananas Theatre, take the Plantation Tour and see the Packing Shed. We then have time to see the amazing award winning Coffs Harbour Butterfly House, Maze and Tearooms. A chance to walk amongst the beauty and diversity of Australia's vast range of butterflies in an indoor subtropical rainforest setting.

Farewelling Coffs Harbour this afternoon we make our way to Nambucca Heads. As we go, note the plantations of Australia's own native nut tree, the Macadamia that have largely replaced the Red Cedar trees of yesteryear. Enjoy a tour of Nambucca Heads, a seaside town situated at the mouth of the Nambucca River whilst taking in the panoramic views of the Tasman Sea from the Headlands. Visit the Graffiti Wall and Mural Corner where bright graffiti and

murals have been painted on the concrete blocks that form the breakwater wall. We arrive at Port Macquarie in time for you to relax before dinner at the motel. Dinner and Breakfast is in the motel restaurant.

Accom: Macquarie Waters Apartments Ph 02 6584 5755

**DAY 21: TUESDAY 12TH JUNE B.D.
PORT MACQUARIE TO SYDNEY**

Leaving Port Macquarie we pass through Taree, Raymond Terrace, cross the Hawkesbury River before arriving in the City of Sydney. Sydney is the largest and most populous city in Australia and the state capital of New South Wales. Located on Australia's south-east coast of the Tasman Sea with an approximate population of 4.5 million, Sydney has a reputation as an international centre for commerce, arts, fashion, culture, entertainment, music, education and tourism. Dinner tonight will be a smorgasbord buffet at the Star City Casino. Breakfast is in the motel restaurant. Our accommodation for the next two nights is at the Novotel on Darling Harbour, being a premium hotel offering Sydney accommodation right in the heart of Darling Harbour.

Accom: Novotel on Darling Harbour Ph: 02 9934 0000

**DAY 22: WEDNESDAY 13TH JUNE B.D.
SYDNEY SIGHTSEEING**

Today we tour this vibrant capital city. Sydney is Australia's oldest and largest city set on one of the most beautiful harbours in the world. We enjoy views of the breathtaking Sydney Opera House; one of the modern wonders of the world, before continuing on to the Historic Rocks area. The Rocks is nestled beside the great arch of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which overlooks the famous sails of the Sydney Opera House. This area, previously Sydney's old quarter was restored to its early charm in the late 1970's, and provides a fascinating range of specialty shops, cafes and craft centres. We make our way through the cosmopolitan Kings Cross, an area close to the centre of Sydney that throbs with life day and night. Express lift to the top of the Sydney Tower and take in the fabulous views of the city. The remainder of the day can be a great shopping experience. Sydney's Paddy's Markets is a Sydney shopping institution and a huge "buzz" on market day. Dinner tonight is buffet style cruising on Sydney Harbour where the beauty of the harbour will dazzle you by night. The harbour is renowned as one of the world's most beautiful harbours and its display of city lights and awe-inspiring ambience will make this a truly memorable experience. Breakfast is in the motel restaurant.

**DAY 23: THURSDAY 14TH JUNE B.D.
SYDNEY TO ALBURY**

Depart Sydney this morning pausing at Berrima, a preserved Georgian village dating back to 1836 that has changed little since early last century. "Five miles" from Gundagai we see the legendary "Dog on the Tuckerbox" and in Gundagai see the 1866 wooden bridge, the longest timber viaduct in Australia. We visit Rusconi's Marble Masterpiece, a lifetime's work of over 20,000 pieces of marble. Continuing along the Hume Highway we make our way through the beautiful Southern Highlands – or "nature's art gallery". We see the famous Ettamogah Pub as we head south before arriving in Albury for our last overnight stop. The twin cities of Albury and Wodonga are set in a rich pastoral area and the industrial and commercial 'heart' of Southern NSW. Dinner and Breakfast is in the motel restaurant.

Accom: Sundowner Albury Ph: 02 6042 0500

**DAY 24: FRIDAY 15TH JUNE B.
ALBURY TO HOME**

We depart Albury on the last day of our tour making our way home through the rich dairying, fruit growing and agriculturally productive areas surrounding the Goulburn River Valley. Travel on home through Bendigo with passengers being farewelled after a memorable twenty-four days exploring Australia from the Desert to the Sea.

Accommodation for the above tour is motel, hotel or villas on a twin share basis. All linen is provided.

Meals – days 1-9 as per the itinerary are prepared outdoors by our specially trained tour cook out of our fully equipped safari trailer with on board fridge/freezer which ensures an abundant supply of fresh food is always available. You will be surprised at the quality of the meals. The day begins with a cooked breakfast, picnic lunches with fresh salads, dinner is always a three-course meal and supper is always available. Enjoy the camaraderie and fun social atmosphere of dining together outdoors (weather permitting) or you may take your meal to your own room if you feel like some privacy.

Meals – days 10 – 24 as per the itinerary will be in the motel restaurant

**PRICE including GST; \$8595.00 per person
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$2320.00**

PRICE INCLUDES:

- **Luxury Coach Travel.**
- **Motel Accommodation (Twin Share)**
- **Admissions to attractions and cruises as per the itinerary.**
- **All meals as specified.**
- **B: Breakfast, L:Lunch, D:Dinner**
- **Pick up & return to your home.**

Travel Insurance is highly recommended and is the responsibility of each passenger.

The Desert to the Sea is a tour that takes in the wonders of the Australian Outback, the glorious climate of Queensland, and many of the pristine localities on the East Coast of Australia.

You will see the tour includes many of the very best attractions on offer